

# DEFEND JEREMY CORBYN

- Right use hate slur to attack left >>Page 4
- Jewish socialist speaks out >>Page 6
- Challenging the system is not antisemitism >>Page 6



# Socialist Worker

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## MASSACRE IN PALESTINE

# ISRAEL RACIST TERROR STATE

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### FRANCE

Rail strikes in France are a signal to bosses

RAIL SERVICES across France came to a halt on Tuesday as the first of 36 planned national strikes hit the network hard.

The rail workers' action is the spearhead of a wider resistance. Air France workers, refuse collectors and electricity and gas workers also struck.

>>Page 8

### RACISM



Football Lads' true colours on show in Telford

A MARCH in Telford further confirmed the racism of the Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA) last Friday.

Around 200 racists and fascists joined the march in the West Midlands town.

They hope to whip up Islamophobia by pushing the lie that abuse and sexism are problems specific to Muslim men.

>>Page 17

### FACEBOOK

Did big data rig the Trump and Brexit votes?

FACEBOOK DATA leaks raised questions about what decides the way we think and vote.

If you believed the liberal hype, you'd think our vision of the world is decided by a handful of powerful nerds.

The reality is more complex.

>>Pages 14&15



# Right use hate slur to attack Corbyn

by CHARLIE KIMBER

**BACK STORY**

**THERE HAS** been no let-up in the use of false antisemitism charges against Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

The assault is coming from the Tories and right wing media—but also from within Labour.

Corbyn was attacked on Monday for attending a Seder feast—part of the Passover holiday—hosted by left wing Jewish group Jewdas.

Right wing blog Guido Fawkes “exposed” Corbyn for attending, with an article pointing out that Jewdas has defended Corbyn against the slurs, and has also criticised the state of Israel.

Labour MPs such as John Woodcock and Wes Streeting claimed his meeting with left wing Jews was an affront to “the mainstream Jewish community”.

Earlier in the week new Labour national executive committee (NEC) member Eddie Izzard said, “We must make amends and repair the damage with the Jewish community.”

Izzard joined the NEC after left winger Christine Shawcroft stepped down.

**Defended**

She had defended a council candidate facing disciplinary action, but later discovered they had shared an article that denied the Holocaust.

Real examples of antisemitism—which are rare in Labour and the Palestine solidarity movement—are used to smear anyone who criticises Israel.

The Campaign Against Antisemitism denounces the trade union-backed Palestine Solidarity Campaign as antisemitic.

And the Tories hope to distract from their own troubles, their brutal austerity policies, and their racism by pointing the finger at Corbyn.

The last two weeks have been the best period for Theresa May’s government since the general election last June.

The NHS crisis, growing poverty and rampant inequality have all been subsumed by a torrent of words about supposed antisemitism saturating Labour.

- The right want to silence the Palestine solidarity movement that’s been growing since 2014
- Smears of antisemitism come after Corbyn appeared to defend an antisemitic mural in east London
- The right wing Board of Deputies of British Jews, who are at the forefront of attacks on Corbyn, are not the voice of all Jews in Britain

JEREMY CORBYN speaking to supporters

## Does the Board of Deputies speak for British Jews?

THE BOARD of Deputies of British Jews, which has been at the forefront of the attacks on Corbyn, poses as the voice of Jews in Britain.

All those who help them are making it harder to fight all forms of racism—including antisemitism. Corbyn’s critics cannot be appeased—there needs to be a confident fightback.

Corbyn gave an interview to Jewish News last week which made clear his abhorrence of antisemitism. It simply led to demands for more and more action against his supporters.

Corbyn is being pressed to expel Ken Livingstone. Shadow minister Liam Byrne said last weekend, “The reality is now that we need action and not simply words.

“We have got a lot of disciplinary cases stacking up and Mr Livingstone is at the top of that queue.”

The message needs to be loud and clear—anti-Zionism is not antisemitism, it’s right to fight for Palestine and Israel is a racist state,” he wrote. “Thankfully the

The Board and the JLC held a rally against Corbyn in Parliament Square recently.

Attendees welcomed on it included Zac Goldsmith, who ran a racist campaign against Sadiq Khan during the 2016 London mayoral election.

Ian Paisley of the Northern Irish DUP, a party that has always simultaneously pushed bigotry and supported Israel, was also there.

The Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) is due to hold a rally in London next Sunday “to demand that the Labour Party holds Jeremy Corbyn to account”.

The CAA was formed in 2014 as Israeli forces invaded Gaza—and as 100,000 marched in London in solidarity with the Palestinians.

Its honorary patrons include former Tory minister Eric Pickles, Tory minister Lord Ahmad, Tory MPs Bob Blackman, Mike Freer and Matthew Offord—and Labour MP Fabian Hamilton.

It also includes Colonel Richard Kemp who was commander of British forces in Afghanistan.

“They still pursue a relentless anti-left agenda and frequently identify internationalist left movements as antisemites.”

In fact the Board is a reflection of one section of conservative opinion, tied firmly to the establishment.

Jonathan Arkush, the Board’s president, personally congratulated Donald Trump on his election.

And after the last British general election, Arkush bemoaned the Tories’ losses.

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## Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

# RULERS FEAR PROTEST—WE NEED MORE OF IT

**T**HE COURAGE and determination of Palestinian protesters has been met by the ferocious terror of the Israeli state.

Israeli forces gunned down 17 Palestinian protesters—and injured more than 1,500—at the border with the Gaza Strip last week.

The 30,000-strong demonstration had marched on the border to demand back land that Israel robbed from Palestinians.

Despite the lethal repression, the massacre underlines how ruling classes fear the masses when they take to the streets.

Demonstrations can help to topple regimes, or be a launchpad for wider social struggles.

That’s why they are sometimes met with bullets.

Israel has been rocked by mass resistance in the past—and fears it could happen again.

The killing of Palestinian labourers on the Gazan border inspired the First Intifada, or uprising, in 1987.

It led to five years of mass resistance to the Israeli occupation across Palestine.

And the Intifada inspired other revolts against US imperialism and dictatorship.

In Britain the struggle is at a much lower level, but the Tories also fear mass protests. Theresa May presides over a weak and divided government.

Mass resistance on the streets, and in workplaces and campuses, could force her out.

Donald Trump, leader of the most powerful imperialist state, backed out of coming to Britain earlier this year for fear of mass protests.

Tens of millions marching worldwide—including two million in London—raised the banner of revolt against warmongers

**“Demonstrations can be a launchpad for wider social struggles”**

George Bush and Tony Blair in 2003. It made politicians much more wary of going to war.

The US and Britain tried to bomb Syria in August 2013, but prime minister David Cameron couldn’t get it through parliament.

Mass protests also help shift people’s ideas. Opposition to US imperialism was at the heart of the anti-war movement. This also transformed Palestinian solidarity politics, which became mainstream on the left.

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel won support from many unions. And Israel’s repeated assaults on Gaza saw tens of thousands in Britain march on the Israeli embassy.

Since 2014 the pro-Israel right have tried to claw all of that back. They want to erase the impact the anti-war and Palestine solidarity movements have had on British politics.

That is what is at stake in the arguments now about antisemitism and Palestine.

The best response this week is to defend Jeremy Corbyn—and put tens of thousands onto the streets of Britain in solidarity with the Palestinians.

## A DICTATOR FOR THE WEST

**E**GYPTIAN DICTATOR Abdel Fattah el-Sisi didn’t quite get 100 percent of the vote in presidential elections whose results were declared on Monday.

The butcher of Cairo won with 97 percent. That’s almost exactly what he got in elections four years ago—after overthrowing previous president Mohammed Morsi in a military coup.

Morsi now faces early death in prison. Hundreds of his Muslim Brotherhood supporters—and many other activists—are also locked up for opposing the regime. Many have been executed.

When Egyptians overthrew Hosni Mubarak—Egypt’s dictator of 30 years—in 2011 they got rid of one of the West’s closest allies.

Their revolution was driven by poverty caused by the privatisation and austerity demanded by bodies such as the International Monetary Fund.

The revolutionary movement turned its sights on imperialism, more privatisation. Sisi will drive those policies through with an iron fist—but will also face resistance.

demanded the opening of Egypt’s border with Gaza.

Sisi’s bloody counter-revolution, began with the massacre of 200 protesters in Cairo’s Raba’a Square in 2013. Now with Sisi in charge Egypt once more has a dictator that the West and Israel can do business with.

Egypt faces an economic crisis. To deal with it Sisi’s Western partners demand more austerity, more privatisation. Sisi will drive those policies through with an iron fist—but will also face resistance.

## RIPPLES OF RESISTANCE

Jane Coles, Julie Hearn and Camilla Royle on the UCU strikes  
Simon Gilbert assesses workers’ struggles in China  
Mark Thomas on the shape of the working class

**Plus**  
Alan Gibson on the Tories’ and Corbyn’s difficulties with Brexit  
Sabby Sagall looks at how the Bolsheviks fought antisemitism  
Nike and Adeola Johnson on Martin Luther King

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## ANALYSIS

SIMON BASKETTER

## Challenging system is not antisemitism

**ONE PIECE** of collateral daftness to come out of the attacks on Jeremy Corbyn and the left as antisemitic is the idea that to oppose the elite is by definition antisemitic.

This is odd since it isn't that long ago that the press were using dog whistle antisemitic term "cosmopolitan elite" as part of their attacks on Labour.

Commentator Nick Cohen makes his living denouncing the left. Repeatedly, and to a deadline, he finds he "can no longer be silent" about its failings.

Last week's version of his one article saw him write in the right wing Spectator magazine, "Every denunciation of high finance on the modern left sooner or later invokes the Rothschilds rather than the Goodwins."

The sometimes wrongly seen as left wing New Statesman joined in.

Matt Bolton and Frederick Harry Pitts wrote, "The anti-semitic tropes which pervade the Corbyn-supporting alt-media and activist base, as well as Corbyn's own dubious brand of anti-Zionism and anti-imperialism, are not mere contingencies, but the logical outcome of the movement's morally-charged, personalised critique of capitalism as conspiracy."

They draw a direct line from the anti-capitalist Occupy movement of a few years ago via Trump and Brexit directly to the evil left.

They do admit that Corbyn's ideas "do not necessarily have to lead to antisemitism". But they also claim that it "does not take much for the search for those 'rigging the system' to alight on the 'rootless cosmopolitan' Jew."

It is guilt by association through Google search terms.

The majority of people rightly blamed bankers for their role in the last global financial collapse. But it was also a crisis of the economic system as a whole. So overestimating the strength of "finance capital" can lead to errors.

The most common one the left makes is to believe that bosses that make their profits directly from workers who make stuff are somehow morally better than bosses that gamble with those profits.

### Weakens

It is the right wing who try to divert anger aimed at the top into racism and antisemitism by claiming that financiers are Jewish. The first is a mistake that weakens workers' fight and the second is a poison intended to crush it.

The very existence of a ruling class is an embarrassment to those who defend the system.

The system justifies itself as a market meritocracy—with rewards going to the best and most entrepreneurial. But the reality is as Ray Charles put it, "Them that got are them that gets".

The ruling class is spread out over a variety of sectors—political leaders, business managers, bankers and financiers as well as factory owners and old fashioned landowners.

The uniform class of wealthy people go to the same schools, marry each other, inherit their power and live their whole lives cut off from the vast majority.

What they do not share is religion. And within that elite are often the foulest of reactionary ideas about Jewish people as well as women and black people.

The ruling class does want to control society and acts in secretive, undemocratic ways to do it. And the failure of the media and politicians to hold governments and business to account leads some to look to conspiracies for answers.

But conspiracy theories—the belief that secret networks of powerful individuals rule the world—are dodgy things that can let the antisemitic right into the debate.

To be clear, the problems in society don't lie in a non-existent secret network of Jewish people. Nor for that matter freemasons or Catholics or alien lizards.

They are rooted in the way our society is structured to defend the interests of the actual elite that controls the capitalist system.

Far from being an all-powerful clique, our rulers can be brought down. That is what they are most scared of and they will use any slur to stop that challenge gaining hold.

It is a sign of that fear that the argument about antisemitism has been expanded to criticism of bankers. The right sense an opportunity—we should oppose them.



A JEWISH Voice for Labour protest in support of Jeremy Corbyn

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## Jewish socialist: 'Don't let right silence support for Palestine'

**NAOMI WIMBORNE-IDRISSI** from the Jewish Voice for Labour group spoke to Sadie Robinson about why the right have smeared Jeremy Corbyn as an antisemite—and why the slurs are so dangerous for activists both inside and outside Labour.

IT ISN'T antisemitic to criticise Israel. But its supporters want everybody to believe it is antisemitic because it's a way to silence support for the Palestinians.

For years people have been campaigning against that conflation. But why is it in the news now?

It's because we've got a potential prime minister, who has a history of support for Palestine and is a genuine socialist.

It would threaten the whole transatlantic power balance.

### Imagine

Imagine if British influence on the international stage was against arming Israel when it's using weapons against civilians.

It has huge implications, so there are a lot of forces against him.

Supporters of Israel have provided a very convenient weapon—call Corbyn an antisemite. And this has been picked up by the entire Labour right.

The Tories love it. The media love it.

It's no coincidence that we had this build-up of criticism. First they were attacking Corbyn over his statements on Russia. Then they had it in for him over Brexit.

Then up comes this huge antisemitism furore. And the Board of Deputies for British Jews are onside.

The last time the Board was part of a big demonstration was to support Israel's assault on Gaza in 2014.

The right were horrified when Labour won seats in the general election and they've been looking for



Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi

any weapon to use against Corbyn.

If I have a criticism of Jeremy, it's that he's too disposed to think that if he conciliates they will cease attacking him. Of

course you must tackle real antisemitism. But you must also call out the people who are using this as a weapon.

The attacks on Corbyn are obviously specific to Labour. But they also come from outside Labour.

### Attacks

A lot of the allegations of antisemitism come from right wing trolls such as Guido Fawkes. They find antisemitic content on the internet and try and link it to someone in Labour.

Outside Labour there's incredibly dangerous stuff going on. The conflation of criticism of Israel with antisemitism is being propagated through universities and in local authorities.

Others say you can't criticise finance capital because really you're being antisemitic. It stops people being able to hold the rich to account.

Some sincere people have been caught up in this idea that Labour's not a safe place for Jews.

I would say to them—I want to be with people who want to fight antisemitism and with all victims of racism to fight its actual causes.

You don't do that by attacking the member of parliament who has the best record of combating racism.

### BACK STORY

## Jewish Voice for Labour

Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi is part of Jewish Voice for Labour (JVL) and a Labour Party member in east London.

JVL "opposes attempts to widen the definition of antisemitism beyond its meaning of hostility towards or discrimination of Jews as Jews".

It organised a protest on the same day when the Board of Deputies held a rally

against Jeremy Corbyn outside parliament.

At Labour's conference she criticised the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM), which has repeatedly accused the left of antisemitism.

She said the JLM would have "a bit more credibility if it did not spend so much of its time running to the Daily Mail and Daily Telegraph with stories".

# Janet Alder supporters vow to keep up the fight

A powerful protest marked 20 years since cops killed Christopher Alder in Hull, reports Eleanor Woyen

**AROUND 250** people joined a protest last Saturday to mark 20 years since the unlawful killing of Christopher Alder at Queen's Gardens police station in Hull.

The protest was organised by Christopher's sister, Janet Alder, and the Justice for Christopher Alder Campaign.

Supporters gathered in Hull city centre to display banners and listen to messages of support, including from FCC refuse strikers and the Hull AfroCaribbean Association.

Janet and the justice campaign delegation marched into the square behind their banner in an emotional moment to applause and cheers.

Janet addressed the crowd before the silent march made its way around the city centre and up to what was Queen's Gardens police station.

Russ Litten, a local writer, read out his powerful and moving poem about the night Christopher died called A Good Night Out.

Marchers then gathered for a public meeting at the Unison union offices where Janet received a standing ovation. The packed-out meeting of over 170 supporters sent a powerful message.

## Inspiration

That message included what a huge inspiration Janet is for fighting for justice in the face of personal attacks, police surveillance, lies and cover ups.

Film maker Ken Fero and barristers Brian Richardson and Yunus Bakhsh from Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) were alongside Janet on the platform.

Speakers from the floor echoed the need for justice campaigns to keep fighting. They pointed to the experience of other families of those who have died in police custody and the Rotherham 12 and Hillsborough justice campaigns.

Another strong message was about the police's institutional racism that was highlighted in the

## BACK STORY

**Christopher Alder died in a Hull police station in 1998**

- A 2000 inquest into his death ruled that he had been unlawfully killed
- Cops spied on Christopher's sister Janet Alder and her lawyer during the inquest
- The police officers involved are still serving
- And a hearing last month said that they would not face any charges

Macpherson report following the death of Stephen Lawrence.

Speakers also talked about other deaths in police custody and the lies surrounding Mark Duggan's death in north London in 2011.

There were banners from the Justice for Christopher Alder Campaign and SUTR groups from across the north of England.

Union banners included Hull UCU, Sheffield, York and district and Rotherham trades councils, GMB North West and Irish region, Hull and East Riding Unite and Napo South Yorkshire.

There was a determination to keep up the fight for justice. As one supporter said, "This is a silent march out of respect for Christopher's memory but we shall never be silent until we get justice for Christopher."



Janet Alder

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## Justice campaign



KEVIN'S FAMILY outside the court last week

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

## Family of Kevin Clarke call for truth as they attend hearing into his death

by ALISTAIR FARROW

THE INITIAL hearing of the inquest into the death of Kevin Clarke, known as KC, began last Wednesday.

A coroner said it may take months to establish the cause of death.

Kevin died after coming into contact with police on 9 March in Lewisham, south east London.

In a statement, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), the police's peer watchdog, said that Kevin was restrained by cops. The police said that they observed him experiencing what they believed to be a mental health crisis.

## Wearing

The IOPC is examining footage from body cameras worn by some of the police officers who attended the scene.

Serious questions remain around the events that led to his death.

Police claim Kevin died at Lewisham hospital. But immediately after the event a witness told Socialist Worker he believed Kevin died at the scene.



Kevin Clarke, known as KC

The witness also questioned why Kevin had to be restrained. They did not believe Kevin was posing a threat to anyone.

When Socialist Worker attended the scene on Monday 12 March there was no police cordon where the event took place.

Kevin's family and friends attended the opening of the inquest into his death last Wednesday.

Afterwards his sister Tellecia read from a statement from the family. "Kevin was well-known and loved in our community and we will truly miss him," she said.

"He was a father figure and a role model to so many, even when he was going through his difficult times.

"He was also a gifted footballer, who would coach young people and dreamt about pursuing this. Unfortunately his dream was cut short."

## Death

At the time of his death Kevin was living in sheltered residential accommodation.

"We do not know exactly what happened or the circumstances which led to Kevin's untimely death," Tellecia said.

"We are left with so many questions and hope that the IOPC will swiftly complete their investigations into Kevin's death and that those officers involved will offer their full cooperation."

No date has been set for the beginning of the full inquest.

The pressure needs to be kept on the police through a united campaign led by Kevin's family.

# Rail strikes are warning signal for the bosses

French workers struck this week as part of a revolt against president Macron, writes Charlie Kimber

**RAIL SERVICES** across France came to a halt on Tuesday as the first of 36 planned national strikes hit the network hard.

The rail workers' resistance is the spearhead of a wider fightback. Air France workers, refuse collectors and electricity and gas workers were also striking on Tuesday.

And on Wednesday, the second day of rail strikes, workers at the French national state broadcaster were set to walk out too.

Over the Easter weekend workers at 300 Carrefour supermarkets struck against job cuts. Speech therapists held big protests.

University and school students are mobilising on the streets and holding occupations.

They are fighting against "reforms" that would make it harder to go to university—and against a series of assaults by the far right.

There is open discussion of a CGT union federation proposal for what could be a general strike on 19 April.

## Demands

All the strikes have particular demands. Refuse collectors want a national service with common employment rights and pay.

Gas and electricity workers want pay rises and an end to imposed competition in the sector. Rail workers are striking for two days in every five to defend their contracts and oppose privatisation.

But workers are united by the feeling that this is a key moment to break the neoliberal offensive from president Emmanuel Macron.

Successive French rulers have dreamed of being the "Margaret Thatcher figure" who would sweep away workers' rights and truly implement free market rule.

They have had partial successes, but not nearly enough from the bosses' point of view.

The French revolutionary socialist organisation the NPA wrote this week, "The attack on the rail is just the beginning of the Macron project.

"Macron wants a society where contracts, rights, pay, hours and

## More online

● **FEATURE:** Heading for a collision on France's railways  
[bit.ly/CollisionFrance](http://bit.ly/CollisionFrance)

● **GALLERY:** French workers revolt against Macron. Photos by Guy Smallman  
[bit.ly/RevoltGallery](http://bit.ly/RevoltGallery)

holidays are negotiated individually. "This is what the rail workers refuse to give up—and they are right. If they lose then all workers lose."

## Concessions

The government made some concessions to rail workers last week, but not nearly enough.

The unions have moved into action, but not yet decisively.

For some workers, proposed united action on 19 April feels a long time away.

Francis, a school teacher from Bordeaux, told Socialist Worker, "We need to move quickly and spread the action now. We should not wait for some struggles to be exhausted before others begin.

"Let's be out together and for as long as it takes. Let's use the energy of the students and the school students as well as workers."

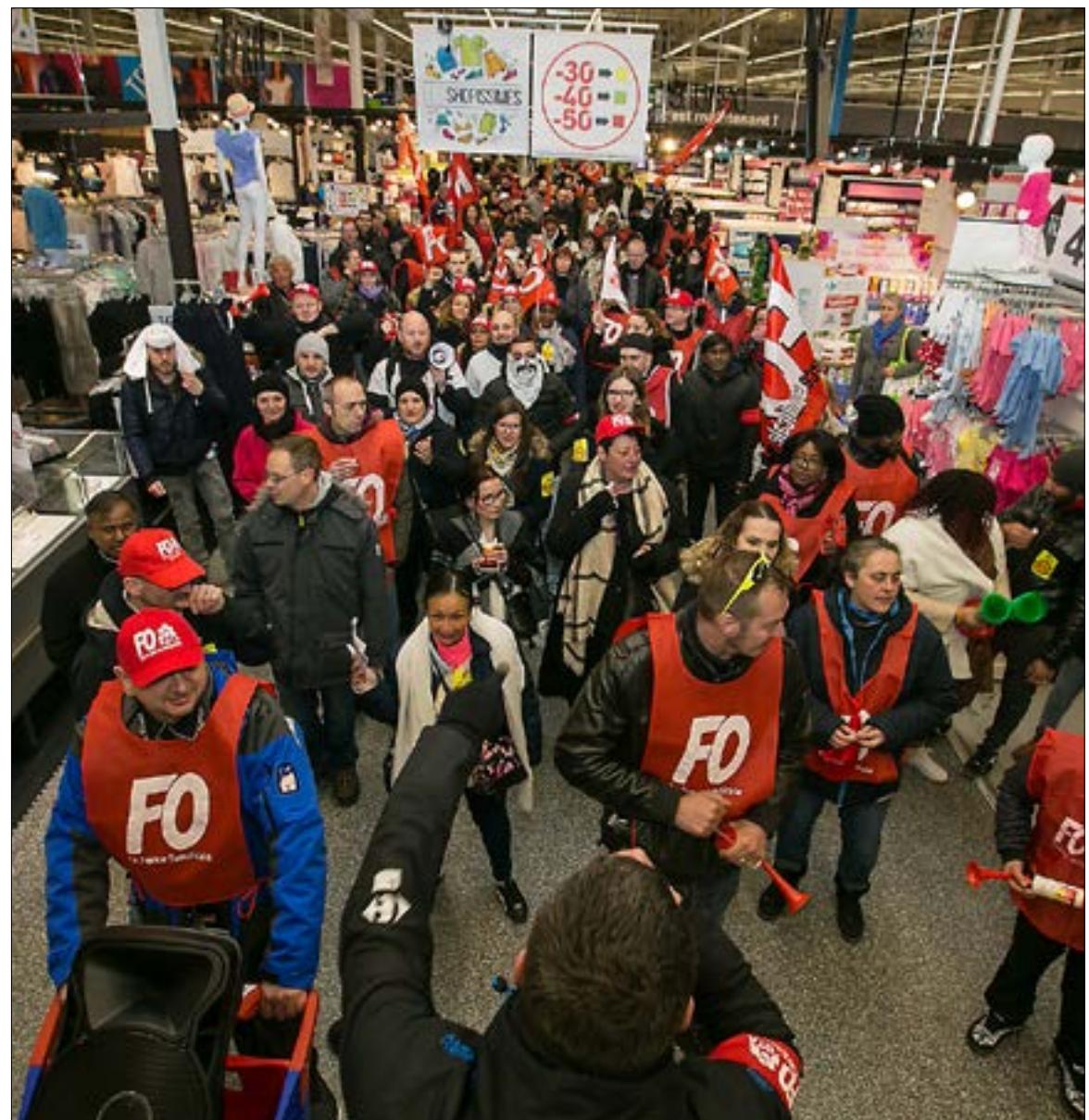
At the same time as building the strikes, workers have to entrench unity.

Macron is pushing new racist laws that must be fought.

The fightback in France is a beacon for workers across Europe—and an example to Britain's trade unions.

It is crucial that French union leaders do not back off until rail workers and all the strikers win.

**On other pages...**  
Why Israel is a racist state >>  
Pages 10&11



SUPERMARKET WORKERS have joined the struggle in France

PICTURE: FORCE OUVRIÈRE

## SYRIA

# British soldier's death in Syria shows how West lies over its interventions

by NICK CLARK

A BRITISH SAS soldier was killed in Syria last week—despite a vote in parliament against British army intervention there.

Sergeant Matt Tonroe was blown up by a makeshift roadside bomb near the northern city of Manbij along with US Delta Force soldier Jonathan Dunbar.

The US has claimed they were both on a mission "to kill or capture a known Isis member".

A 2013 vote in parliament agreed not to send British military forces to Syria—humiliating then Tory prime minister David Cameron. A vote in 2016 agreed only to airstrikes.

## Turmoil

Yet despite this the SAS has been fighting in Syria since as early as 2012.

They form a shady part of Western attempts to control Syria amid the turmoil caused by the Assad regime's counter-revolution.

British and US special forces have most recently been helping

the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) take control of northern Syria.

This has mostly involved fighting Isis, which grew in Syria after the Assad regime abandoned the north to focus on crushing the revolution around Damascus and in the south.

But the US has abandoned its SDF allies after they were attacked by Nato member Turkey.

The SDF is mainly made up of militant groups from the Kurdish minority in northern Syria. Groups such as the YPG hoped to carve out a Kurdish statelet in northern Syria and looked to Western forces for arms and funding.

Yet their growth worried the government of neighbouring Turkey. The Turkish state is fighting a brutal war against its own oppressed Kurdish minority.

It feared northern Syria could become a base for Kurdish fighters in Turkey.

Turkey invaded north west Syria in January—and seized the city of Afrin from the SDF last month.

Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his invasion could

extend much further into northern Syria, all along the border with Turkey and possibly in Iraq. He has recently talked of building a "Greater Turkey" beyond its current borders.

This has put Turkey and the US at odds.

But rather than confront Turkey, the US has left the SDF to be crushed by the Turkish invasion.

## Worth

Now US president Donald Trump has frozen over £140 million of funding for SDF controlled areas. US officials have said Trump's government wants to "reassess Washington's broader role in the protracted conflict" in Syria.

This came after a shock announcement by Trump last Thursday that the US would leave Syria "very soon".

It's another manoeuvre in the scramble by regional and global powers to carve up Syria in the wake of its civil war.

The ordinary people of the Middle East—and those who hoped for support from imperialism—are its victims.

## Prevent in mental health

A NEW report on the Tories' "Prevent" strategy made chilling reading on Islamophobia in mental health services.

Published by Warwick University last week, it showed that two in three referrals to Prevent in the NHS come from mental health trusts.

Prevent forces public sector workers to spy on Muslims for signs of "radicalisation".

But two in three NHS workers said they were not confident to distinguish between someone who had been radicalised and someone who had an interest in Middle Eastern politics.

That's unsurprising since the very basis of Prevent is Islamophobic and there is no scientific way of predicting who is at risk of radicalisation.

This report follows an NUS survey that showed Muslim students are subject to Islamophobic abuse while being unable to express their views or be themselves because of Prevent.

Prevent does nothing but add to the "othering" of Muslims within British society.

At a time when the public sector is under huge attacks by the government, we need service users and workers standing together to fight its austerity agenda.

And we must not allow them to whip up racism as a way of distracting us from the urgent need to unite.

Nahella Ashraf  
Manchester



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

## 'We will fight to stay part of the NHS', says Wigan porter

**HEALTH BOSSES** in Wigan want to outsource 900 of us porters, cleaners and security staff to WWL Solutions Ltd.

They first told us about it last September. Initially they said they're doing it because the trust is £1 million in debt. At a meeting a week ago the figure was £7 million—now we've had a letter saying it's £14 million. The money is just going up and up.

They've tried to change tactics and said our terms and conditions would be guaranteed for 25 years, not the 12 months they originally said. But if another company takes over that's not guaranteed.

Bosses David Evans and Andrew Foster will be retiring in a few

years' time. Are they going to be bothered in 25 years' time about our terms and conditions?

They'll get their pensions and bugger off. And we know that new starters will be on different terms and conditions if the new company comes in. It will cause low morale, people saying, "He's on so much" or "He should be doing that". Everyone is against that.

I get premium pay rates for working on the weekend, but new starters won't. If they want to run a business, not an NHS service, then they're not going to give me the weekend shifts.

There's a lot of anxiety going about—but everyone has come together. I've never known a

department like this.

There are people in their 50s and 60s who are retiring soon and don't have to be bothered for themselves, but they are up for fighting this for the young people.

And we've had a really good reaction. We had people from North Wales coming up supporting us. A lot of eyes are on us.

We've voted against the proposals and said we're prepared to take industrial action. If we go on strike, the hospital won't work normally that day.

All NHS work should be taken in-house—we shouldn't be a separate company.

A hospital porter  
Wigan

## Victory at Keir Hardie shows strikes do work

IT'S SO important that the governing body of Keir Hardie School in Newham, east London, decided not to go ahead with academisation (Socialist Worker, 28 March).

It seems to me that academies are just another right wing scam designed to privatise education and turn schools into exam factories.

The recent scandals of Multi Academy Trusts (Mats), which run groups of academies, having to go cap in hand to the

government for bailouts makes that very clear.

Parents and teachers up and down England have been trying to stop their schools being turned into academies.

They've held protests and teachers have gone on strike.

But Newham shows that a big campaign—and more than just one day of strikes—can force councils and governors to back down.

Jenny Fullbrook  
Otley

## Another war by the US is now inevitable

IT IS more than a little ironic that General HR McMaster's resignation as Donald Trump's national security adviser makes war inevitable.

He was replaced last week by John Bolton, who was a member of George W Bush's administration during the Iraq War.

All that remains in doubt is the country that the US is going to attack. At the moment, Iran seems the most likely target.

But North Korea also remains a definite possibility for an attack.



Warmonger John Bolton

Whereas McMaster was always aware of the dangers that war would involve, Trump can only see the advantages.

A war will show the US's military might and will—as far as Trump is

concerned—intimidate the rest of the world.

It will fuel US chauvinism and nationalism.

But, most importantly, it will provide a pretext for Trump to close down the Mueller investigation into his links with Russia and to label any critics as traitors.

This is almost certainly Trump's dominant motive.

And as for the dead and mutilated in a war, in Trump's universe—such people are just losers.

John Newsinger  
Brighton

Just a thought...

## NHS offer is a miserly sham

AFTER I tried the NHS pay calculator, it said that I could get a 23 percent pay rise over the next three years (Socialist Worker, 28 March).

The proposed deal would give health workers 6.5 percent over three years.

That's better than the 1 percent we've had for the last ten years.

But it's still below inflation—so it's still a pay cut.

And you only get big figures like 23 percent because the calculator adds the national pay rise and incremental pay rises that we'd get anyway.

My colleagues were shocked to find out that the new deal links increments to performance.

How are we supposed to pass local targets when the NHS is being deliberately underfunded?

Laura Evans  
South London

A LOT of my workmates thought that the proposed NHS pay deal was good after they went on the pay calculator.

After I explained to them that the lowest paid would lose unsocial hours pay they were less than impressed.

Keith Jones  
Banbury

## Let's fight like the Danish

WOW! OVER 10,000 shop stewards in Denmark gathered to discuss going on strike (Socialist Worker, 28 March).

That's exactly the sort of organisation of union members that we need in Britain if we're going to take on the greedy bastards here.

James Plywood  
Folkestone

## Stand up for council homes

WHY IS London mayor Sadiq Khan backtracking on giving tenants a vote on regeneration schemes (Socialist Worker, 28 March)?

Labour local authorities should be leading the way in fighting the Tories' attempts to finish off council housing.

Melrose Winstanley  
North London

# WHY ISRAEL IS A RACIST STATE

Supporters of Israel say it's antisemitic to call Israel racist. They want to silence legitimate criticisms of its institutional racism against the Palestinians. **Sarah Bates** and **Tomáš Tengely-Evans** explain why Israel oppresses Palestinians—and why racism was built into the state from its very foundation in 1948

## What is Zionism?

ZIONISM IS Israel's founding ideology. It emerged in response to antisemitism in Europe at the end of the 19th century.

In Tsarist Russia the regime used Jews as a handy scapegoat. Thousands of Jews were killed in state-backed pogroms.

Zionists argued to leave places of persecution and set up an exclusively Jewish state. But just because Zionism was a response to oppression doesn't make it progressive.

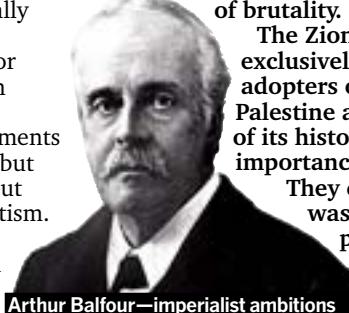
The logic of Zionism sees antisemitism as an inevitable feature of society rather than something that can be eradicated through united struggle.

Zionism was a minority current among European Jews. But the atrocities of the Nazis forced Jews to flee. Jewish refugees were turned away from countries such as Britain and the US.

Many more Jews became convinced of the necessity of a Jewish-only state. Zionists were only able to establish Israel because of brutal repression of Palestinians, and the support of Western imperialism. It still relies on both of those things today.

This dates back as far as 1917 when Tory home secretary Arthur Balfour formally backed "the creation of a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.

Successive governments have backed Israel—but this support isn't about challenging antisemitism. It is about fortifying the role of Israel as a powerful ally in the Middle East.



Arthur Balfour—imperialist ambitions

## How was the Israeli state created?

ISRAEL WAS founded by settlers from Europe who sought to steal Palestinian land from its inhabitants, leading to a century of brutality.

The Zionist dream is an exclusively Jewish state. Early adopters of Zionism claimed Palestine as "theirs" because of its historical and religious importance to Judaism.

They claimed Palestine was "land without people for a people without a land".

They meant that the

people who had lived there for centuries—the Palestinians—didn't really belong.

The UN said in 1948 that 55 percent of Palestine would be given to Zionist settlers—but they wanted more and took it by force.

A crucial point in the foundation of Israel was the Nakba, or Catastrophe, in 1948.

Armed Zionist militias forcibly expelled Arab people from their homes, and seized control of Palestine.

Whole villages and towns were burnt to the ground—this was ethnic cleansing on a huge scale.

As a result of this some 850,000 Palestinians became refugees.

The Nakba marked the beginning of a further 70 years of violence toward Palestinian Arabs by Zionist settlers.

ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION of Palestine will always provoke resistance

## Why is Israel a racist state?

PALESTINIANS LIVE under constant Israeli oppression. An apartheid wall hundreds of miles long imprisons Palestinians in the West Bank.

Over 1.5 million are trapped in Gaza which is little more than an open air prison.

The Israeli state controls Gaza's borders, which are subject to stringent controls.

A blockade also means medical supplies often can't reach those who need them.

Most Palestinians in Gaza are unable to leave.

And Israeli forces destroy Palestinian farms and businesses, in a concerted attempt to damage the Palestinian economy.

This is no accident—racism is built into the foundation of the Israeli state.

From its creation Israel has enshrined into law contempt for Palestinian Arabs because it seeks to be an exclusively Jewish state.

For instance, a law allows citizenship to all Jews from all

## Is it antisemitic to oppose Israel?

THE WEST'S rulers want to undermine the Palestine solidarity movement by smearing Israel's opponents as antisemitic.

The British government has adopted the International

over the world, but won't allow Palestinian refugees back into Palestine.

Palestinians in Israel are treated like second class citizens. If they show "disloyalty" to the Israeli state they are stripped of citizenship.

They also face employment discrimination, higher rates of poverty, and difficulties accessing housing and land.

That racism has grown beyond hatred of Palestinians. Black Ethiopian Jews face discrimination and racism on the streets.

Thousands of African refugees and migrants in Israel are being threatened with indefinite imprisonment if they do not leave.

And Israeli forces destroy Palestinian farms and businesses, in a concerted attempt to damage the Palestinian economy.

This is no accident—racism is built into the foundation of the Israeli state.

Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism. It identifies antisemitic tropes pushed by the far right, such as "Jews controlling the media" or Holocaust denial.

But the examples it gives also include "claiming that the

existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavour". Israel is a nationalist, racist and colonial project that has strengthened Western imperialism—and relies on this relationship for its own existence.

The experience of living under

of Israel is based on occupied Palestinian territory—and racism runs through its fabric. A "two state solution" would not address the Palestinian right to return to lands they were expelled from in 1948, or racism towards Arabs.

Israel would only let a subjugate Palestinian statelet exist alongside it. But even the basis for such a statelet is disappearing.

Israel keeps grabbing what's left of Palestinian land in the West Bank through settlements. And now Donald Trump has officially recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital—denying the claim of Palestinians.

That's the logic of Israel's racist, colonial project. The only solution is a single Palestinian state with equal democratic rights for Arabs and Jews.

## Is there a 'Jewish lobby'?

THE US and Britain back Israel's occupation of Palestine to the hilt.

They support Israel's bombing and siege of the Gaza Strip. And they do nothing to stop Israel grabbing what's left of Palestinian land in West Bank.

The US gives Israel £2 billion in aid every year—a figure that dwarfs foreign aid to other countries.

The West's support for Israel leads some supporters of Palestine to see a "Zionist lobby" or "Jewish lobby" influencing foreign policy. They point to organisations such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (Aipac) lobbying group.

Right wing racists also use the term "Jewish lobby" as a code for antisemitism.

There is a special relationship between the US and Israel, but arguing that it's down to a "Jewish lobby" gets the relationship the wrong way round.

The West backs Israel because it is in its imperialist interests.

Israel firmed up its special relationship with the US in the Six Day War in 1967 when it defeated the armies of neighbouring Arab nationalist regimes.

It grabbed East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria and the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Desert from Egypt.

This showed the US that Israel was a reliable protector of its

interests in the Middle East threatened by movements against imperialism.

Israel has been US imperialism's watchdog in the Middle East ever since.

## Why do socialists support the Palestinian resistance?

PALESTINIANS HAVE a right to resist Israeli occupation by whatever means they choose.

National liberation for Palestinians would be a blow against Western imperialism—in the Middle East and across the world.

Winning working class people in imperialist countries, such as Britain, to supporting Palestine would also weaken nationalist and racist ideas pushed by our own rulers.

That means we don't pick and choose whether to support Palestinian resistance depending on what organisation is leading it—although we argue for socialist politics.

The main organisation resisting Israel since the 2000s has been Hamas, an Islamist political party with an armed resistance wing.

Hamas grew after the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership accepted the sham peace process and relinquished its claim to a single state. Hamas and the Palestinians had every right to carry on the fight against Israeli occupation.

Similarly Hezbollah in Lebanon is not socialist, but it was a national liberation force whose defeat of Israel in 2006 was a major blow to imperialism.

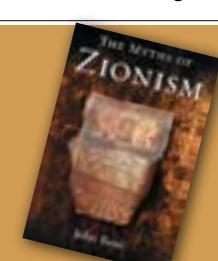
Resistance by Palestinians weakens Israel and terrifies its backers such as the US and Britain.

More than once Palestinian resistance has inspired revolts and protests across the Middle East that open up the possibility for wider, progressive and even revolutionary change.

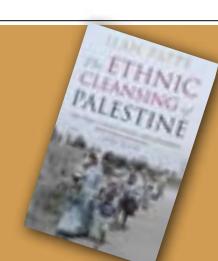
Not supporting resistance because we disagree with the groups that currently lead it means lining up with those who blame Palestinians for fighting back.



Palestine: Resistance, Revolution and the Struggle for Freedom



The Myths of Zionism



The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine

All available from Bookmarks Bookshop, 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE Phone 020 7637 1848 Email info@bookmarksbookshop.co.uk Web bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

## WHAT WE STAND FOR

**These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.**

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

## { SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

### BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Wed 25 Apr, 7pm,  
The Priory Rooms,  
Quaker Meeting House,  
40 Bull St,  
B4 6AF

### CHESTERFIELD

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 12 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Chesterfield Library,  
New Beetwell St,  
S40 1QN

### COLCHESTER

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 26 Apr, 7.30pm,  
The Odd One Out,  
28 Mersea Rd,  
CO2 7ET

### EDINBURGH

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Wed 11 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria St,  
EH1 2JL

### GLASGOW

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Sat 21 Apr, 4pm,  
Soulsa Café,  
87 Glassford St,  
G1 1UH

With author Yuri Prasad

### HARLOW

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 12 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
1 Church Leys,  
CM18 6BX

### LONDON: HACKNEY

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 19 Apr, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel  
(corner Lower Clapton Rd),  
2 Powerscroft Rd  
E5 0PU

### LONDON: HARINGEY

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Wed 18 Apr, 7.30pm,  
St John Vianney Church Hall,  
386 West Green Rd  
(corner Vincent Rd),  
N15 3QH

With author Yuri Prasad



### LONDON: ISLINGTON

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Wed 2 May, 7pm,  
The Old Fire Station,  
84 Mayton St, N7 6QT

With author Yuri Prasad

### MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 19 Apr, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St,  
M2 5NS

### NEWCASTLE

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 19 Apr, 7pm,  
Mining Institute,  
Neville Hall,  
Westgate Road,  
NE1 1SE

## SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS



Protesting to defend Corbyn against false claims

# Palestine, antisemitism and defending Corbyn

### CAMBRIDGE

Thu 12 Apr, 7.30pm,  
River Lane Centre,  
River Lane, CB5 8HP

### GLASGOW

Thu 12 Apr, 7pm,  
Avant Garde,  
33-44 King St,  
Merchant City,  
G1 5QT

### HULL

Thu 19 Apr, 7pm,  
Cafe Licious,  
104 Cottingham Rd,  
HU6 7RZ

### LONDON: EALING

Thu 12 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Y Lounge  
YMCA West London,  
25 St Mary's Rd,  
W5 2RE

### MEDWAY

Thu 12 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Nucleus Arts Centre,  
272 High St,  
ME4 4BP

### NEWCASTLE

Thu 12 Apr, 7pm,  
Commercial Union House,  
39 Pilgrim St,  
NE1 6QE

### NOTTINGHAM

Wed 11 Apr, 7.30pm,  
International  
Community Centre,  
61b Mansfield Rd,  
NG1 3FN

### PORTSMOUTH

Wed 11 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Somersetown  
Community Centre,  
River's St, PO5 4EZ

### SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Thu 12 Apr, 7pm,  
Central United  
Reformed Church,  
60 Norfolk St, S1 2JB

### SOUTHAMPTON

Wed 11 Apr, 7.30pm,  
The Strand,  
7-9 Hanover Buildings,  
SO14 1JX

### ST ALBANS

Wed 11 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Trinity Church Hall (upstairs),  
1 Beaconsfield Rd,  
AL1 3RD

### WIGAN

Thu 12 Apr, 7pm,  
Little Fifteen pub,  
17-19 Wallgate,  
WN1 1LD

## LONDON: HARINGEY

Is a democratically-run economy possible?

Wed 11 Apr, 7.30pm,  
St John Vianney Church Hall,  
386 West Green Rd  
(corner Vincent Rd),  
N15 3QH

## LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Should socialists defend free speech?

Wed 11 Apr, 7pm,  
Epainos Church,  
Lichfield Road,  
E3 5AT

## NORWICH

Marx, money and bitcoin

Thu 12 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Vauxhall Centre,  
Johnson Place,  
NR2 2SA

## PLYMOUTH

Politics of the mind—Marxism and mental distress

Thu 19 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Quaker House,  
74 Mutley Plain,  
PL4 6LF

## TELFORD

Fighting the pay cap—how do we win?

Wed 18 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Carriages,  
The Parade,  
Wellington,  
TF1 1PY

## WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

## The EU—what's wrong with the single market?

Wed 11 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Wild Bytes Cafe,  
Darlington St,  
WV1 4HW

## YORK

## The crisis in NGOs and aid agencies

Wed 11 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Sea Horse Hotel,  
4 Fawcett St,  
YO10 4AH

## MOVEMENT EVENTS

### DORSET SOCIALISTS

#### A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King

Sat 14 Apr, 1.30pm,  
Colliton Club,

Colliton Park, DT1 1XJ

### WEYMOUTH

## School dinners and poverty

Sat 28 Apr, 2pm,  
Weymouth Old Town Hall,  
High W St,  
DT4 8JH

Public meeting

organised by WeyPAW

### LONDON

#### Marx@200

Sat 19 May, 1-6pm,  
Birkbeck, University of London,  
Malet St, Bloomsbury,  
WC1E 7HX

Speakers: Alex Callinicos,  
Sue Caldwell, Joseph  
Choonara, Sally Campbell

### NATIONAL

## Marxism 2018—a festival of socialist ideas

5 - 8 July,

central London.

Marxism is a four day political festival of debate, discussion hosted by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), marxismfestival.org.uk

### A new deal for working people

A demonstration called by the TUC union federation

Sat 12 May, 11am

Embankment, London

Go to [bit.ly/TUC12March](http://bit.ly/TUC12March)

## Celebrate resistance with Socialist Worker this May Day

May Day is a chance to celebrate working class solidarity against the bosses and resistance to oppression. Every year Socialist Worker produces a special supplement of May Day greetings from our readers in trade unions, colleges and campaigns. Make sure to get yours in by **Tuesday 10 April**

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● 3 column: £95

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## CONTACT THE SWP

Phone 020 7840 5600  
Email [enquiries@swp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@swp.org.uk)  
Post PO Box 74955,  
London E16 9EJ

# Shakespearean drama meets Thomas Sankara in new play

Ricky Dujany's ambitious debut play looks at a major figure in the 1980s battle for African liberation. It raises important questions, writes Jay Williams

**SANKARA IS** an overtly political drama. It is based on the life of Thomas Sankara, president of Burkina Faso—formerly Upper Volta—from August 1983 to October 1987.

Director Ricky Dujany illustrates the life and death of Sankara within a Shakespearean framework.

The play starts at a tremendous pace, combining revolt with African dance.

The first word spoken by the statuesque Sankara is “comrades”.

But there is no mistaking that this is a military coup.

In places the rhetoric of the play, using Sankara's own speeches and sayings, is wonderful. This is combined with some original pieces of wit.

The same white actor plays a South African, French President Francois Mitterrand and a CIA stooge. This device neatly portrays imperialism as systematic and connecting.

## Benefits

It also helps to show tensions between different African countries and who ultimately benefits from them. And, as Sankara says, “Those who exploit Africa exploit Europe too”.

The audience is directly involved in the play. Sankara addresses the audience, not only as a crowd but as individuals.

We are encouraged to join in the chanting at one point—a brave thing for a director to do.

This contrasts with the main depiction of the political tensions, which are shown as within the ruling elite of the time and not involving the



SANKARA discussing with women comrades in the play (left) and the man himself (above)

masses. Some of whom are described as “lazy workers” and “children”.

This contradictory attitude is seen throughout the play.

Sankara is shown as being firmly on the side of ordinary people and in particular railing against the oppression of women.

But he is also shown as autocratic, trying to force those around him to accept changes and a lack of privilege that they are not ready for.

This production is nearly three hours long, with an interval. The other warning is that strobe lighting is used occasionally.

This is not the only technology used. Drapes fall across the stage exits and real scenes of political and cultural events from the time are projected on to them.

The film is slightly out of focus, underlining that this is a fictional account of real events.

Dujany may take the Shakesperian analogy too far at one point.

The wife of Blaise Compaoré (whose forces brought Sankara to the presidency) is characterised as being the ambitious one, to the extent of using her sexuality to push Blaise in a certain direction.

Sankara was murdered by his former ally and best friend Blaise so the question is has Dujany shifted the responsibility too much on to his wife?

However, at the end as bodies litter the stage and screams are heard off stage we are left in no doubt that this is literally a tragedy.

I would highly recommend seeing this play. It has the potential to make you both laugh and cry. For a first time author it is very good indeed.

Sankara is on at The Cockpit, Gateforth Street, London, NW18 8EH until 14 April. Tickets from £13

## Multidisciplinary art will leave audiences Misty-eyed

### THEATRE

#### MISTY

by Arinzé Kene  
At the Bush Theatre,  
7 Uxbridge Road, London,  
W12 8LJ until 21 April  
Tickets from £10  
For more information go to  
[bushtheatre.co.uk/event/misty](http://bushtheatre.co.uk/event/misty)

RIGHT FROM the misty start to the blazing end this play holds your attention.

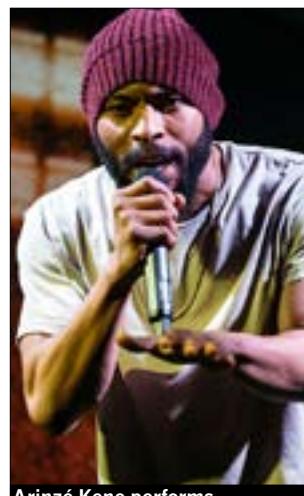
It uses spoken word, physical theatre, poetry, mime, rap, video projections and music to produce a different and

inventive way of telling a story.

The powerful original music score is played by drummer Shiloh Coke and keyboard player Adrian Mcleod pounds and weaves its way throughout the drama.

Throughout this play Arinzé Kene interrupts himself with searching questions about being a black playwright and how to write a play without slipping into stereotyping.

How he represents culture is the main argument from his friends



Arinzé Kene performs

and the main dilemma he is wrestling with. He often addresses the audience directly about his confusion while answering his own questions.

#### Pulsating

He imagines the city as a body with main arteries and capillaries pulsating with blood cells and viruses.

His is a city that alienates and chokes the life out of the black community who live there.

Gentrification of areas with trendy cafes, pop up shops, artists and

expensive property that is driving the local people away.

This play has many layers that are gradually peeled and then bent back on to themselves again.

The last piece—Jungle Shit—is extremely powerful and angry.

It tries to sketch all the questions and prejudices about modern urban society that are swirling around in his head. An emotional, moving, funny and thought-provoking two hours.

Judy Shapter

### TELEVISION

#### ONE STRANGE ROCK

National Geographic Channel  
Mondays at 10pm

THIS SERIES shows us some of the contradictions of this world. It has some wonderful cinematography and uses it to display both the frailty and stability of our planet.

The first episode of this series is about the chance occurrences that have produced life on earth.

It is about contradictions in nature but also about balance. It explains how for millions of years nature has achieved a balance that allows us and other smaller organisms to breath.

Its findings are the result of space exploration, but it opens up a myriad of questions to us.

It tells us how the colours we see change with the amount of oxygen our lungs take in. It tells us how we need gravity to produce tears.

There is a poetry in the



Inside One Strange Rock

ideas here as well as in the stunning pictures.

Too much oxygen and we fry. Too little oxygen and we choke.

This is as much about the colour of our planet as it is about survival. It is about the blues and the greens that are created by the layer of oxygen that it says creates a fragile rim around the world.

Take a breath and take another as you watch this interesting series.

Fred Fitton

### EXHIBITION



One of Inga Bystram's paintings

#### I LOVE MY HOME - AN AMAZING PLACE NOT A SINK ESTATE

at The Hub, Lordship Rec, London, N17 6NU between 11am and 5pm until 27 April

INGA BYSTRAM has documented life on the Broadwater Farm estate in Haringey, north London, as well as the campaign against the Haringey Development Vehicle.

**T'S A SCARY WORLD OUT THERE.** Powerful people are doing grubby things with personal information we may not even realise we've made available to them on the internet.

Cambridge Analytica harvested data from millions of Facebook users then sold it to the Trump and Leave campaigns to help them win.

Recent revelations regarding this have raised big questions about what—or who—decides the way we think and vote.

According to some commentary that's followed, the revelations show how a shadowy cabal of millionaires, politicians and computer programmers are responsible for Trump and Brexit.

For the past week the Guardian newspaper has run stories claiming the Leave vote may never have happened if it wasn't for Cambridge Analytica's involvement.

Whistleblower Christopher Wylie—the Guardian's star source—claimed the Vote Leave campaign won the referendum by "cheating". It allegedly broke election spending rules to plough money into a Cambridge Analytica franchise that targeted certain voters with adverts.

The same argument is made about Trump's election. Trump's former adviser—the far right media mogul Steve Bannon—helped to set up Cambridge Analytica, which was then hired by Trump's campaign.

## Harvested

Using data harvested from 50 million Facebook profiles, Cambridge Analytica claimed to be able to gain intimate insight into the personalities of individual users. Then it could "micro-target" specific sections of users with highly personalised adverts.

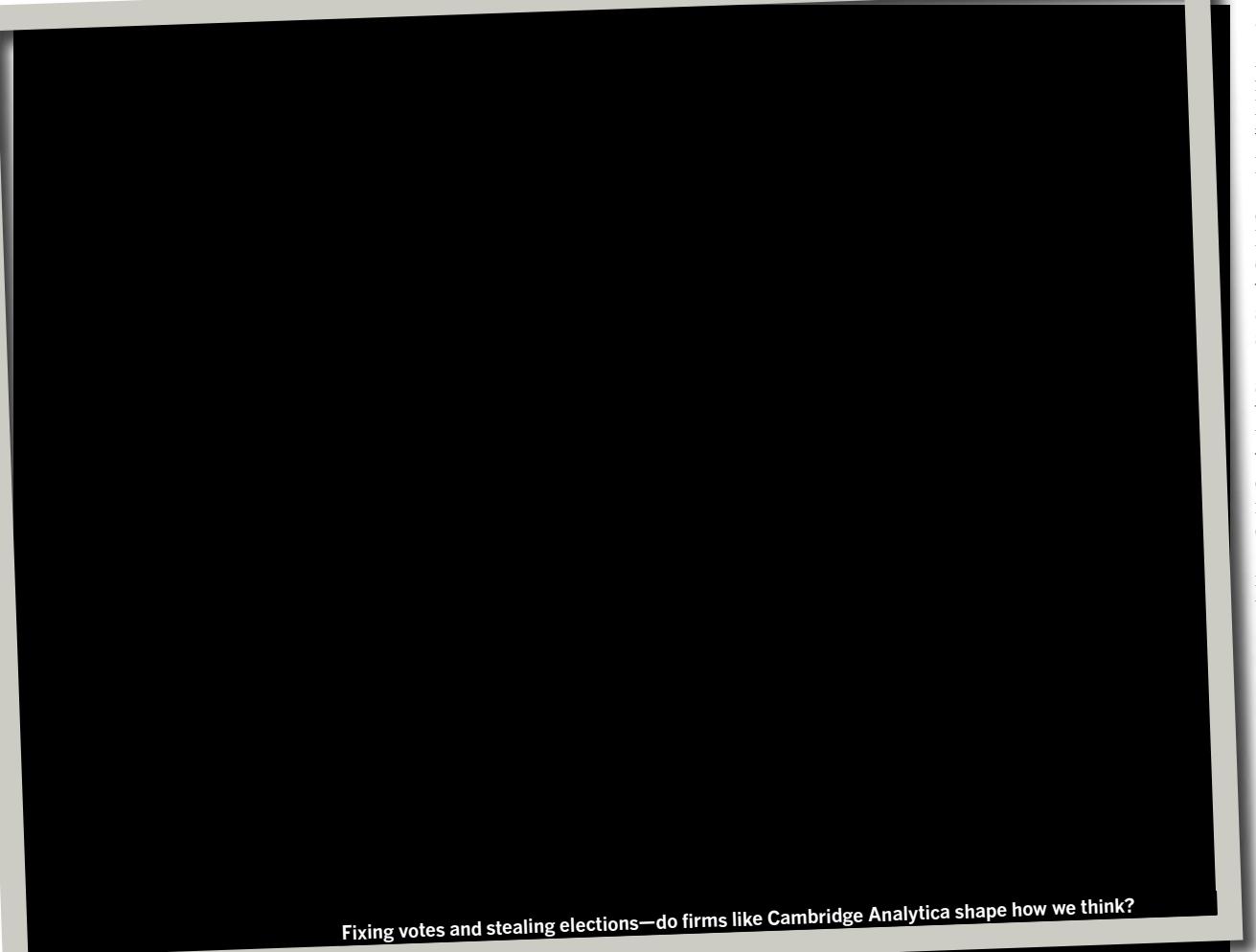
Wylie, who helped set up Cambridge Analytica, called this "psychological warfare". Pundits say it gave Trump the edge he needed to win the election.

Much of this belief means taking Cambridge Analytica's self-hype at face value.

While putting his wares about the US, chief executive Alexander Nix made fantastic claims about his company's ability to read and influence people's thoughts. It's how he persuaded right wing multimillionaire Robert Mercer to stump up the cash for Cambridge Analytica in 2013.

Nix was determined to take credit for Cambridge Analytica's "integral" and "pivotal" role in Trump's election. His former clients aren't so sure.

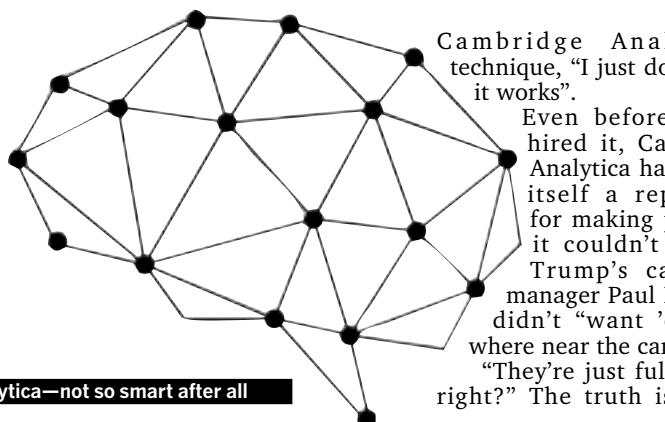
Before the scandal broke, Trump's digital and media strategist Brad Parscale said of



# DID BIG DATA RIG THE VOTES?

If you believed the liberal hype, you'd think that our vision of the world is decided by a handful of powerful nerds.

**Nick Clark argues the reality is far more complex**



Cambridge Analytica—not so smart after all

Cambridge Analytica's technique, "I just don't think it works". Even before Trump hired it, Cambridge Analytica had earned itself a reputation for making promises it couldn't deliver. Trump's campaign manager Paul Manafort didn't "want 'em any where near the campaign. "They're just full of shit, right?" The truth is there's

more to what shapes the way people think than smart advertising, slick propaganda and clever computer programming. There's a very patronising view that says some people were simply manipulated into voting for Trump or Brexit. Certain liberal commentators are happier to believe that and lump together the two results than seriously analyse them. But there are much bigger changes happening in society that affect the way we think

about it.

People's ideas aren't just pushed into their heads by the media, politicians, adverts or propaganda. They're shaped by the reality of our everyday lives and the world around us.

The way that society is organised determines how we live our lives. It forms the basis of how we understand the world and our place within it, so most of the time this setup seems natural.

We can accept as common sense the ideas that justify the way society works. The idea that we should all worry about whether businesses, bankers and financiers can keep making huge profits is one example of this.

That means racist arguments—such as that immigration can cause lower pay—can also seem to make sense when bosses claim they can't afford to give everyone a decent wage.

Despite this, when our experience brings us into conflict with the system we can become more open to ideas that challenge it. Arguments for years of pay restraint, for instance, have far less purchase when we see bosses raking in billions of pounds of profits.

Importantly, people can play a role in shaping their own ideas too—especially when they come into direct confrontation with the system.

Recently workers in universities have organised huge strikes in defence of their pensions.

Strikers, including many low paid and precarious workers, have found themselves leading a struggle in ways they wouldn't have thought themselves capable of just a few weeks earlier.

The battle has meant many feel much more confident about what they can achieve.

**T**HE EGYPTIAN revolution of 2011 is another event that liberal pundits tried to credit Facebook for. An endless amount of words were written about how social media had meant people could finally rise up against a 30 year dictatorship.

When the government shut down the internet just days into the uprising, people still managed to organise mass protests and strikes that brought the regime down.

Many who were there remember the fantastic debates that took place about the society people could build once the regime was gone.

As people fought to change the world, their ideas changed with it. That left a legacy so deep that the current regime has waged an incredibly brutal counter-revolution in a bid to destroy all memory of it.

The disaster of the Iraq war has made it harder for politicians to justify new invasions and interventions in the Middle East.

But the massive Stop the War movement in 2003 saw millions

of people join protests against the invasion. That left a legacy of opposition to imperialism among a significant layer of people in society.

That's something that fed into the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party leader—and which right wing politicians and pundits are still fighting to break down.

It's just one aspect of a much bigger problem that they face.

When a society collapses into crisis, the ideas that justify it are challenged.

For over three decades politicians have ruled over a neoliberal consensus—that's meant privatisation, low wages and job cuts.

In Britain Tory and Labour politicians alike have counted on mainstream media outlets to broadly reflect and promote this worldview. But as people's jobs, wages, services and lives have steadily worsened, trust in the media and politicians has fallen.

The financial crash of 2007 was the major turning point. The system was clearly broken.

This has led to major upsets across the world.

The Arab revolutions of 2011 was one of these. There have been major outbursts of anti-austerity protests on nearly every continent, and the rise of left wing political forces, such as Corbyn or Syriza in Greece.

## Election

That same process has facilitated the growth of far right forces—particularly across Europe—and the election of Donald Trump.

It's also responsible for more complicated phenomena such as the vote for Brexit.

The battle has meant many feel much more confident about what they can achieve.

There's a constant battle for ideas that's particularly sharp during periods of crisis. Mainstream politicians and media fight desperately to rescue their old ways of thinking. But that battle also takes place among those at the top of society.

Facebook can be regulated and new data laws can be passed.

Some very rich and powerful people, with a different vision for how capitalism should work, have noticed a space for their own ideas to grow.

The likes of Trump and Mercer have excelled at taking advantage of this—particularly in the US where distrust for politicians was highest among right wingers.

People such as Nix have made fortunes out of selling ways to help them do that.

## READ MORE

● Marx—ideas and struggle  
by Chris Harman  
[bit.ly/HarmanMarxIdeas](http://bit.ly/HarmanMarxIdeas)

● The internet, social media and the workplace  
by Martin Upchurch  
[bit.ly/UpchurchInternets](http://bit.ly/UpchurchInternets)

● The Point Is To Change It  
by John Molyneux  
£4.99

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



The media wants to undermine stories of Grenfell survivors. It's part of a push to let the guilty off the hook, writes **Alistair Farrow**

HARDLY A week goes by without the media trying to discredit survivors, residents and justice campaigners around the Grenfell Tower fire.

Meanwhile the politicians and bosses who made the decisions that led to the blaze, and profited from them, escape such scrutiny.

There has been no hatchet job of Robert Bond. He is still a director of the Rydon Group, the firm that made the decision to install the flammable cladding.

Grenfell Media Watch produce regular videos on social media analysing the mainstream media's coverage of the atrocity.

Toyn Agbetu from the organisation told Socialist Worker, "The media should be holding the government to account, "But it has its own agenda and is intrinsically tied up in political interests."

He added, "In terms of Grenfell it's not really in the interests of the media to forensically analyse the actions of their allies."

The media focus on ordinary people linked to Grenfell Tower in order to introduce doubt into the public's mind about the stories of survivors. Often this means linking them to criminal behaviour.

If survivors aren't off limits, it's easier to dismiss anyone who diverges from the establishment's agreed chain of events as a conspiracy theorist or far left infiltrator.

The Times newspaper smeared estate resident Joe Delaney for claiming support in the wake of the fire.

Trauma from the fire meant he could not continue

## FOCUS ON GRENFELL

# Press wages war on Grenfell survivors to help the Tories

## More online

● What does justice mean for Grenfell campaigners?  
[bit.ly/whatjustice](http://bit.ly/whatjustice)

● Grenfell residents still homeless six months after fire  
[bit.ly/Grenfellhomeless](http://bit.ly/Grenfellhomeless)

● VIDEO: 'We've been treated with contempt'—Grenfell, a Tory council, and the anger that refuses to fade  
[bit.ly/Grenfellanger](http://bit.ly/Grenfellanger)

to deflect anger from the Tories and housing bosses responsible for the murder at Grenfell.

If survivors aren't off limits, it's easier to dismiss anyone who diverges from the establishment's agreed chain of events as a conspiracy theorist or far left infiltrator.

The artist pushed a petition that was calling for more representative panel in the inquiry to over 100,000 signatures. It is now due to be debated in parliament on 14 May. Toyin described what justice for those who died in Grenfell would look like.

"People need to go to prison for what has happened," he said. "And publishing the truth can help make sure that never happens again".

He added, "We need every media platform fighting against the mainstream media.

"Everyone's got different agendas—but we're in the eye of the storm, looking for justice."

# Tories sneak out immigration reports

by TOMÁS TENGELY-EVANS

**THE TORIES** tried to smuggle out five reports into their racist immigration policies last week in the hope they wouldn't be noticed.

The Home Office published the reports a few hours after home secretary Amber Rudd had begun giving evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee.

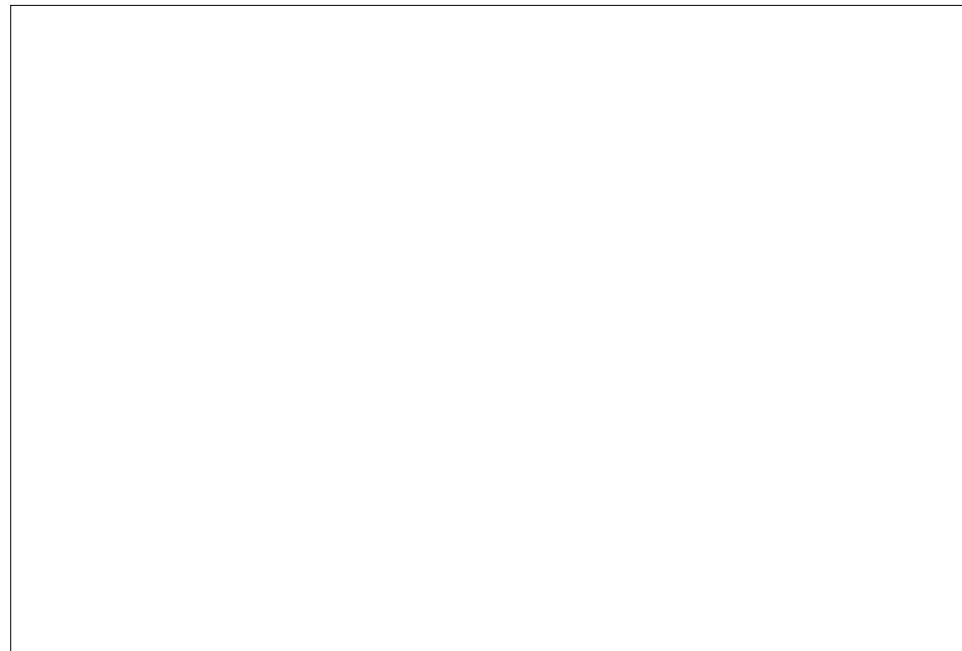
And their publication came only two days before parliament's Easter recess.

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's (ICIBI) reports make damning reading about Britain's asylum policies.

One ICIBI report documented how the Home Office tries to make it harder for unaccompanied children refugees to enter Britain.

Some 2,959 unaccompanied children had made applications for asylum between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017.

The Home Office raised 705 "age disputes" in that period—and in 402 of those cases ruled that the refugees were adults.



## TORY IMMIGRATION policy in action

The report shows that the policy for determining age is stacked against claimants.

Home Office staff "were left to make judgements about age based on their 'own experiences' of what children and adults looked like".

It details one case of a

Syrian refugee which showed how "failures could seriously compromise a claimant's best interests". He was born on 10 November 1999 and registered his asylum claim on 30 August 2016.

On the same day the Home Office raised an "age dispute"

and "recorded the claimant's date of birth as 10 November 1997".

This decision meant six months of uncertainty for the Syrian refugee.

After the refugee's "substantive asylum interview" in February 2017, the Home Office

changed his date of birth on the Case Information Database (CID) to 10 November 1999.

Yet finally being recorded as a child wasn't the end of the ordeal.

The Home Office did not close the age dispute on the file or make clear the decision to any other agency.

It is down to individual case workers whose "views differed about when to use the 'significantly over 18' option".

Home Office and local government services operate a "benefit of doubt" rule which allows some refugees to enter Britain.

The report found that Home Office workers were more willing than social workers to give children the benefit of the doubt.

"Social workers told inspectors that Home Office staff could 'too readily' apply 'the benefit of the doubt,'" it said.

The Dubs Amendment to the Immigration Act was supposed to oblige the British government to take in unaccompanied child refugees. The Tories resisted it at every turn.

First they defeated

attempts to specify that Britain should take in 3,000 child refugees—and then closed the programme last year.

Many of the unaccompanied children are part of the 1,500 refugees trapped at Britain's border in Calais in northern France.

They have fled the West's wars, poverty and dictatorship.

The only solution is to open the border and let in all the refugees—children and adults.

For more go to [standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)

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# Football Lads' racism on display in Telford

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

A MARCH in Telford further confirmed the racism of the Football Lads Alliance (FLA) last Friday.

Around 200 racists and fascists joined the march in the West Midlands town organised by the True FLA—Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA). It is a section of the FLA that broke with founder John Meighan after falling out over money (see box).

Telford has seen police and authorities fail victims of child sexual exploitation. The FLA and DFLA are hoping to whip up Islamophobia by pushing the lie that abuse and sexism are problems specific to Muslim men.

The fascists see the FLA as an opportunity to rebuild a movement. The FLA and DFLA leaderships also want to build an Islamophobic street movement. And Ukip hopes to rebuild its electoral base.

Ukip MEP Bill Etheridge told marchers, "I stand with you every step of the way."

He is making open appeals for fascists to join Ukip so it can "be a real force".

In a Facebook Q&A ahead of the march someone asked, "Why won't you let former English Defence League (EDL) members join?"

Etheridge replied, "As far as I'm concerned, come on board."

The South Yorkshire branch of Anne Marie Waters' far right For Britain party also came on the DFLA march.

Outside the police station one woman heckled, "It's not Asians, they're Muslims."

Gurnak Singh was on the march representing Veteran Against Terrorism, a deeply Islamophobic outfit.

"There's one community here, it ain't Sikh, ain't Asian, ain't Buddhist—stop saying the word Asian," said Singh. "At this moment in time, it's the Pakistani community, this is where all this is coming from."

"I'm not saying all Muslims, but certain sects in this

## BACK STORY

The Football Lads Alliance (FLA) is holding a series of demonstrations after the movement split

- It has previously claimed it is a "non-political" movement
- Its demonstrations have seen speakers from far right and racist organisations
- It announced plans to hold its next march in Manchester
- Anti-racists must take the threat of the FLA seriously

community are not going right."

The FLA and DFLA have also taken an open turn against the Labour Party. At the Telford march Norman McGuigan from the Veterans said to loud cheers, "Let's get Mr Corbyn out."

Placards on the march read, "A vote for Labour is a vote for rape".

And the DFLA Facebook page shared a Ukip poster attacking London's Labour mayor Sadiq Khan.

A group of Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) supporters were on the streets of Telford to oppose the racist protest. It's important that SUTR

has mobilised in London, Birmingham and Telford when the FLA has marched—but the numbers on our side have been far too small.

Now the FLA has called a protest in Manchester on 19 May. The DFLA also plans to march in the city, but hadn't named a date as Socialist Worker went to press.

The whole of the left and labour movement must take the threat seriously—and mobilise against them in Manchester.

## Now is the time to organise to stop racists building a street movement

THE FOOTBALL Lads Alliance and Democratic FLA aim to build a racist movement on the streets.

They split after a row over money with FLA founder John Meighan.

Two marches in Birmingham by the FLA and DFLA on 24 March appeared to show differences between the two groups.

On the FLA march people heard openly racist speeches from the far right. FLA founder John Meighan was overshadowed by former fascist English Defence League (EDL) leader Tommy Robinson, who got the loudest cheers.

Meighan has tried to shore up support within the FLA by playing up his support for both Robinson and Islamophobia. He was previously much more cautious about associating with Robinson and the far right.

Fascists always saw the FLA as a potential recruiting ground—and have grown in prominence within it.

Meanwhile the leadership of the DFLA remained largely careful in their speeches at the Birmingham march. They were at pains to appear more respectable, carried football banners and laid wreaths.

That DFLA leadership remained gaurded on the Telford march. Speakers relied on racist "dog whistles", such as claiming that "political correctness" was



Racists from Newcastle and Sunderland come together for the FLA

preventing them from speaking the truth. But the audience it pulled was clearly a crossover from both the FLA and DFLA marches. Gone were the football banners and wreaths.

### Nazi

Unlike Meighan, the DFLA has so far shied away from endorsing Nazis, but it's clear that fascists see both offshoots as opportunities to grow.

While Robinson did not make an appearance in Telford, his close associate Mo Fyaz did and tried to shape the politics of the protest.

What the DFLA organisers and Ukip speakers hinted at, Fyaz said explicitly. He shouted on the Telford protest, "It's Muslim men

from my community—I can say it, I can say it."

The DFLA's racism is clear. They have tied themselves more closely to Ukip. Ukip leader Gerrard Batten spoke on their march in Birmingham and its Facebook page shares posts from Ukip and MEP Bill Etheridge in particular.

The right is in flux. Some within the FLA want to build a racist populist street movement against Muslims.

Fascists are becoming more prominent and see it as an opportunity to recruit into their ranks and build a street fighting force. We must not let the far right regroup.

For more go to [standuptoracism.org.uk](http://standuptoracism.org.uk)



Protesting against the FLA

## IN BRIEF

### Bosses dial a fight in London districts

UNITE UNION members who work for the dial-a-ride service were on strike for 48 hours last week in a fight against new rosters and the withdrawal of ten rest days a year. They walked out on 28 and 29 March.

Some 120 Unite members at depots in north London and Orpington provide transport for older people, vulnerable people and those with disabilities.

United regional officer Hugh Roberts said, "The removal of rest days and the imposition of impossible rosters will directly affect the safety of our members and their passengers."

"They will no longer enjoy the rest periods they need in order to cope with what is a difficult, complex and stressful job."

### United Resistance to fracking launched

A 100 Women March near a fracking site in Lancashire on Tuesday marked the beginning of a three-month sustained campaign against fracking.

The United Resistance campaign comes as protesters in Lancashire face increasingly heavy-handed tactics by police.

### Sixty years of the fight to scrap nukes

ANTI-NUCLEAR campaigners gathered on Sunday at the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment in Berkshire to mark the 60th anniversary of a historic protest.

A march there in 1958 led to the launch of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

More online—Pat Arrowsmith recalls the first Aldermaston march. Go to [bit.ly/Aldermaston1](http://bit.ly/Aldermaston1)

### Strong strike vote at Al Jazeera

WORKERS AT the Al Jazeera news network have voted to strike over pay. They are demanding wage increases and a more transparent pay system.

Journalists in the NUJ union voted by 90 percent for strikes. Media workers in Bectu—part of the Prospect union—voted by 80 percent.

### Determination on display in Liverpool

HOUSE KEEPERS at Liverpool Museums protested against short staffing on Tuesday of last week.

The members of the PCS union are also worried about the use of private contractors to staff some exhibitions.

After the protest, organisers said it seemed managers were now, "listening and willing to meet the union to solve endemic short staffing".

## REFUSE WORKERS



REFUSE WORKERS in east London walked out

PICTURE: GORDON ROLAND PEDEN/UVW FACEBOOK

## FCC

### Refuse workers in Hull are out to give the bosses hell

DRIVERS AT an FCC waste management depot in Wilmington, Hull, are striking for two weeks to demand sick pay for all workers.

The action follows a previous seven-day strike. Workers in the Unison union rejected a 2 percent pay rise on the basis that it wasn't being paid to everyone.

The action has grown with workers from Driffield who also work for FCC, showing their support on the picket.

FCC managers have threatened agency staff with the sack.

And they have suspended two workers who were on strike previously—including the Health and Safety rep—on trumped up charges.

Despite this the mood among pickets has hardened.

Senior shop steward Russell Bowering said, "They're always saying to us that FCC are a company that like to do the right



thing. It's time they realise that what they're doing is wrong and they need to pay everyone sick pay."

• WASTE collection workers in Essex are set to start a wave of strikes against "rubbish management" on 12 April.

The 65 Unite union members plan to walk out every Thursday and Friday for the next three weeks.

They are then set to strike for 72 hours from 1 May and a further three 24 hour strikes in May.

## LIBRARIES

### Librarians throw the book at outsourcer over low pay

BROMLEY LIBRARY workers have walked out on indefinite strike in a fight for pay.

Some 36 workers in 14 libraries in the south London borough are fighting for an above inflation pay rise. After a 100 percent

vote for action, the strike began on 28 March.

Unite union members are fighting for a 2 percent rise in keeping with the local government pay offer.

But tight bosses from outsourcer GLL are refusing to budge.

## NHS

### Demo against NHS pay deal

HEALTH WORKERS have called a protest against a proposed pay deal in central London for Friday 13 April.

The deal represents a

below-inflation pay rise, would sneak productivity-linked pay through the back door and strengthen the hand of managers. It would slash unsocial hours pay for the lowest paid and many

ambulance workers.

The deal would also make increment progression less frequent—and link it to appraisals by management.

Activists should join the protest outside the Department of Health on Friday of next week—and call for strike ballots to win real pay rises.

• For more information go to [Ditch the deal](#) on Facebook

## ROYAL MAIL

### Postal workers end dispute

ROYAL MAIL postal workers have voted to end a dispute over pensions, pay and conditions.

Members of the CWU union voted by 90 percent to accept a deal.

Socialist Worker opposed the deal. A new pension will mean improvements for some.

But the 100,000 workers who are currently on a defined benefit scheme risk getting less.

Whether or not the scheme will be implemented also depends on whether the Tory government passes the legislation needed to introduce it. The agreement also means a below-inflation pay deal.

A show of strength by workers forced bosses to make concessions.

Now they must be ready to fight if bosses come back for more.

## TRANSPORT



DLR workers on strike last week

## BUSES

### All out in Aberdeen

DRIVERS AT First Aberdeen were set to begin an indefinite strike on Friday to defend their terms and conditions.

Workers voted unanimously to escalate their action at a mass meeting of over 200 people last Thursday.

Around 250 Unite union members have been on strike for 11 days. While industrial action has forced the company to make concessions, Unite union branch convenor Graham Gavin said, "They haven't gone far enough."

First Bus is employing 45 scab drivers to provide a limited service on key routes at peak times during the day. But it has admitted that this is unsustainable with the company losing between £100,000 and £200,000 in the first ten days of strikes.

Drivers should continue with the action that has brought First Bus to its knees.

**John Connell**

### Fight over conditions on the Docklands Light Railway

WORKERS ON the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) in London walked out for 48 hours last week in a long-running dispute about working conditions.

The cleaners and travel safe officers are employed by outsourcing firm KAD, which operates the service for Transport for London.

They are fighting outsourcing, attacks on rostering, abuse of procedures and payroll mistakes.

RMT union members on

the DLR struck on 28 and 29 March and plan to walk out for four consecutive days in April. The April strikes will coincide with the London marathon, which is set to cause huge disruption.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said, "RMT members employed by KAD have had enough of being treated like dirt."

"They have made it clear that they are prepared to stand up and fight for their fundamental rights."

**Sarah Bates**

## COLLEGES

# Strikes because, ‘We have had no pay rise for 9 years’

by SADIE ROBINSON

**WORKERS ACROSS** six further education colleges ended a three-day strike on Thursday of last week.

The walkout hit five London colleges—City and Islington, Croydon, Lambeth, Westminster Kingsway and the College of Haringey and North East London—and Sandwell College in the Midlands.

Workers at Havering College struck for two days from Tuesday.

UCU union members are fighting a derisory 1 percent pay recommendation from the bosses' Association of Colleges. But many of them aren't even being offered that as individual colleges refuse to give any rise.

**Nothing**

Mandy is branch secretary of the UCU at Lambeth College in south London. She told Socialist Worker, “Our ‘offer’ was that we get nothing this year but maybe 1 percent next year. But we'll be putting in a new pay claim next year anyway.”

Workers met to reject the so-called offer ahead of this week's strike.

“One woman said, ‘I'm a single mother and I can't



CITY AND Islington strikers were in defiant mood

PICTURE: SEAN VERNELL

afford not to strike’,” said Mandy. “A lot of people were angry. In our department we've had two more people out for this three-day strike than we had during our previous two-day one.”

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell sent a message to strikers on the first day of

the walkouts. “I send my full support and solidarity in the action you are taking,” he said. “I am so proud of you all for standing up to fight for decent pay and conditions. You have my 100 percent support.”

He added that the Tories have “refused to recognise the vital contribution you make

to our society”. Anger at the Tories' underfunding of education lies behind the action.

Lambeth striker Julia told Socialist Worker, “We've had no pay rise in nine years—it completely devalues what staff are doing.”

There was an upbeat mood on the picket lines,

despite strikers facing heavy rain last Wednesday. At City and Islington College, pickets sang in the rain.

Workers have been buoyed by support from other unions and students.

Dom, equalities rep at Sandwell College, told Socialist Worker, “We've probably had the biggest picket lines we've ever had.

“Dudley trades council has come to show support, as have NEU union members. Greenwich NEU gave us a £250 donation. Previously we had FBU union members visit the picket lines too.

“The solidarity means we don't feel alone. The mood has been exultant.”

Dom said that workers had thrown out a deal that would have meant “an extra 49p a day”. “There were strings attached too,” he said. “They wanted to take away three hours of planning time. But we're already taking work home.”

More pay strikes could follow. And the action comes as other groups of workers fight over jobs. UCU members at Hull College are balloting for strikes over the threat of 231 posts being slashed.

More action can protect workers' pay and jobs—and defend further education.

## UNIVERSITIES

## Upsurge of revolt over new offer

&gt;&gt;&gt;continued from page 20

68 UCU members meet—a large number during the holidays. They passed an indicative motion by 64 to three with one abstention “to strongly recommend a vote of No on the UUK proposal and to circulate a petition to this effect to the membership”.

The union leadership is expected to put the offer to a ballot this week—during the Easter holidays.

This deliberately gives little time for activists to organise the no vote.

Yet several universities have called emergency meetings to discuss the offer.

The UCU London region has called a strike coordinating meeting. And activists are organising to demand that the union calls a higher education sector conference to discuss the

**dispute. Discussions**

Carlo Morelli is a UCU negotiator and is on the union's national executive.

He told Socialist Worker, “Where branches have had discussions, the outcome has been very different to when they are just presented with a bland statement.”

He added that the move to ballot is part of a desire by the union leadership to reassert authority. “They wanted this action and thought it was fantastic,” he explained.

“But it got out of their hands and they couldn't sell a deal. So now they want to reimpose control.”

Unsurprisingly, UUK reacted to the ballot by demanding more retreats.

**Suspension**

It said bosses' support for the proposal was “conditional on the suspension of industrial action”.

The union has called a week-long strike in 12 universities starting on 16 April, and a three-day walkout in another. Activists should not let bosses hold them to ransom. They must demand that the action stays on.

There is no deficit in the scheme and workers are right to argue that they shouldn't pay any more or get any less in retirement. Hunt claimed this is an unrealistic demand.

In reality it is something that workers can win if they reject the offer and organise to keep the strikes on.

●UCU London meeting, Thur 5 April [bit.ly/LondonCoord](http://bit.ly/LondonCoord)

●Carlo Morelli's video arguing the case against the deal is at [bit.ly/NoToUUKVideo/](http://bit.ly/NoToUUKVideo/)

## SCHOOLS

## Teachers show solidarity with Muslims

ANTI-RACISM WAS a big theme of the NUT teachers' union conference last weekend. It took place as Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn is under intense attack from right wingers over antisemitism.

New NUT president Kiri Tunks read a letter to delegates on Sunday sent by general secretary Kevin Courtney to Tory foreign secretary Boris Johnson.

It condemned Israel's latest assault on Palestinians and called on the government to do the same.

The letter led to applause on conference floor and delegates chanting in solidarity with Palestine.

Over 100 delegates and visitors came to a SWP fringe meeting on “Palestine, antisemitism

and defending Corbyn”. And teachers on Sunday unanimously passed a motion condemning schools' inspector Ofsted's targeting of Muslim girls who wear the hijab in schools.

It said Ofsted questioning Muslim girls who wear the hijab could lead to “further marginalisation” and “physical and verbal attacks”.

Jess Edwards from the national executive said the move was “part of an orchestrated campaign” against Muslims by people who have “no interest in fighting sexism”.

Latifa Abouchakra from Ealing in west London said, “I say shame on Ofsted for victimising young girls.” She rejected the idea that Muslim girls and women

passively accept instructions by men on what they should wear. “My dad didn't want me to wear the hijab,” she said. “I chose to.” Latifa also rejected the “imperialistic thinking” that assumed the West must rescue oppressed Muslim women.

An amendment expressed “solidarity with all Muslims” affected by the racist “Punish a Muslim day” on Tuesday. A number of delegates described the fear among some Muslims.

Delegates also passed a motion to unite battles against Islamophobia with those for LGBT+ liberation. Debs Gwynn from Halton told conference, “This is a systematic attack and we have to fight it together.”

●Longer online at [bit.ly/NUTAntiRacism](http://bit.ly/NUTAntiRacism)

## EAST SUSSEX

NEU UNION members across seven East Sussex schools are balloting for pay strikes. They are demanding the 2 percent rise that teachers in the rest of Sussex have received but that East Sussex County Council has so far refused to grant.

Phil Clarke is in one of the schools balloting for action. He told the NUT conference, “We've got a real chance of winning it. The worst result we got in our indicative ballots was a 97 percent yes vote on an 80 percent turnout.

Phil told a Socialist Teachers' Alliance fringe meeting at the conference, “On average it would cost £1,700 per school for the entire year to meet our pay claim. This can be afforded. These arguments have really got traction.”

If workers vote for strikes, the first walkouts could take place later this month.

## THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

THE DEPARTMENT for Education (DfE) has refused an application for a west London school to form a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) with an academy. The news was leaked to Hank Roberts, an anti-academy campaigner and NEU union activist in Brent.

It follows strikes by NEU members at The Village School against the MAT proposal.

Jenny Cooper, joint NEU rep at the school, told Socialist Worker, “Teachers were so happy when they heard the news. I think there's a chance that we could stop this now.”

The plan would have seen The Village School form a MAT with Woodfield Academy. Union members and parents resisted the plan because they feared the impact on children, and workers' conditions.

“If there's a new application, we will argue that there should be a new consultation,” said Jenny. “And we could ballot for strikes again.”

# TEACHERS MUST PUSH PAY FIGHT

by SADIE ROBINSON in Brighton

**TEACHERS COULD** be heading for a national strike ballot over pay. Delegates at the NUT union conference in Brighton last weekend passed a motion calling on the union to launch a "vigorous campaign" over pay.

The conference also saw important decisions about fighting racism and school funding cuts.

The union has demanded a 5 percent pay rise, following years of real-terms pay cuts.

Lisa Murray from Lewes Eastbourne said, "Talking about it is not enough. Members want action."

Her school is among a group of seven east Sussex schools where workers are balloting for strikes in a local dispute over pay.

## Briefings

Paul is a teacher in Tower Hamlets, east London. "Pay is the issue that's coming into the centre stage," he told Socialist Worker.

"The motion we passed calls for regional reps' briefings in every association.

## UNIVERSITIES

# Upsurge of revolt over union leaders' attempt to end the pensions fightback

UNIVERSITY workers who have struck for 14 days are fighting the latest attempt to push through an end to their battle.

Those arguing to keep striking are winning wide support—and there is a real chance to overturn the union leaders' undemocratic moves.

UCU union branch delegates met in London last week to discuss a new "offer" in their pensions dispute.

General secretary Sally Hunt said a majority wanted the offer to go out to ballot.

But Des McDermott, the delegate for Ruskin



TEACHERS' UNION delegates voted for a pay battle

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

If activists fight to make these big, it will add to the pressure on the union leaders to move to a national ballot."

Rob is a sixth form teacher in Newham, east London. "We've reached a breaking point," he told Socialist Worker. "I know teachers who say, 'I won't be here in a

couple of years' time'.

"They know they won't be able to afford to stay in London."

Many teachers stressed that the fight over pay can't be separated from the battle against school funding cuts. If pay rises aren't funded, the money will be taken from elsewhere.

There was widespread agreement that winning over pay would take a substantial campaign.

Lisa, a teacher in Chesterfield, told Socialist Worker, "There's a feeling that one day's worth of action isn't enough. The UCU university strikes have shown

that people are confident to take action if they believe the union has a genuine strategy to win."

Jill from Bradford agreed. "One-day strikes are not the way to go," she told Socialist Worker. "You've got to do it as a sustained campaign." The motion also called for an



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

College in Oxford, said the "majority of branch delegates" made clear the offer should be "revised and resubmitted".

"The union's Higher Education Committee (HEC) decided to ignore these views and put the offer directly to a ballot of UCU members," he said.

"This raises serious questions about democracy in our union."

Another report from Queen Mary university's Lee Jones said, "Less than a quarter [of reps] favoured an immediate e-ballot on the amended text. Half favoured a 'revise and

resubmit' approach and a further quarter wanted more clarifications before a ballot."

The offer postpones a planned attack on the pension scheme and says an "expert panel" will look at how the scheme should operate in the future.

This is a retreat by Universities UK (UUK) bosses. But it gives no long term guarantees for the scheme.

Many UCU branches posted angry responses on social media following the decision to ballot. Liverpool UCU tweeted, "This offer lacks the assurances and clarity

that this historic dispute deserves.

"We recommend to our members and to other branches that they say no. We are in a strong enough position to fully guarantee our pensions now and into the future."

Bath UCU said the offer gave "no long term commitment on defined benefit pensions" and that bosses "are out to destroy our action and our solidarity". Goldsmiths UCU urged workers to "reject the stitch-up".

A Newcastle university meeting on Thursday of last week saw >>>turn to page 19